Steffanie A Strathdee is Associate Dean of Global Health Sciences and Harold Simon Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine. A Canadian-American, she is also an Adjunct Professor at Johns Hopkins and Simon Fraser universities. She co-directs UCSD’s International Core of the Center for AIDS Research and the new Center for Innovative Phage Applications and Therapeutics (IPATH). An infectious disease epidemiologist, she has spent the past two decades focusing on HIV prevention in marginalized populations in developing countries and has published more than 600 peer-reviewed articles. Currently, she leads a multidisciplinary team of research on HIV risk behaviours among people who inject drugs on the Mexico-US border; in this team, she developed one of the first interventions for female sex workers who inject drugs. In 2009, Dr Strathdee and her team were awarded the Leadership Award in International Collaboration from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which also granted her a merit award for her research in Tijuana.